ITSC News

IHS Information Technology Support Center

March, 2001

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Information Technology Support Center
Division of Information Resources
Indian Health Service

News from ITSC Teams

Web Team

Len Thurman

Accessibility and Usability of the IHS Web

New federal regulations require all government web sites to be fully accessible by users with disabilities. This has required the entire Web Team to mount a major effort to bring all IHS web sites into compliance by a June 21, 2001 deadline. All IHS web pages will be reviewed and, where necessary, modified in order to allow special web browsers for the visually impaired or blind to communicate content to the users.

With well over 10 gigabytes of data available in static form on IHS Intranet and Intranet web sites, the job is monumental in scope. Strategies for meeting the June 21st deadline are currently in the works. All Area, Tribal, and Urban programs with web pages hosted on IHS web servers will be contacted during the month of March regarding the process. Current plans call for the Web Team, along with designated contracted firms, to collaborate on the actual conversion of sites for compliance with the new federal rules. IHS, Tribal, and Urban webmasters who create and manage their own sites, or those created by the Web Team, will have the option of making changes to their sites or allowing the Web Team, and contractors, to make the changes for them.

Along with ensuring accessibility of IHS web sites, the Web Team is launching a concurrent project to make the sites more usable and user friendly. Look for a customer comment page on the Intranet and Internet to share your ideas with the Web Team. These comments, combined with extensive usability testing scheduled for March - April, will yield a new, user friendly interface for all top level IHS pages. Rollout of the improved page designs is scheduled to coincide with the June 21 accessibility deadline.

IHS Jobs Vacancy Databases Combined and Improved

The IHS Job Vacancies Database (JVDB) has recently undergone the first phase of a major overhaul. The JVDB is the Agency's most heavily accessed and used site. It now has been combined with the Health Professionals Job Database (HPDB).
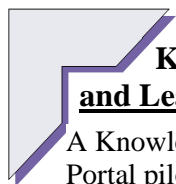
The new consolidated JVDB system boasts many new features and enhancements includes the following:

1. Multiple wage systems and pay plans, annual and hourly wages, and jobs without salaries.

2. Job posters with the number of open positions for a vacancy.

3. Ability to link up to five or more grades to a vacancy.

4. Ability to link job vacancies to any IHS facility and post vacancies under more than one IHS area.

5. Updated and cross-referenced facility information.

6. "Open Until Filled" job types.

7. Enhanced user interface.

Accounts have been set up for previous users of the HPDB system. We are encouraging all IHS recruiters to take advantage of this web-base recruitment system, which now supports 111 registered users.

Web Site Address:
http://www.ihs.gov/jobscareerdevelop/careercenter/vacancy

Knowledge and Learning Portal

A Knowledge and Learning Portal pilot is being developed under the Knowledge Management track of the "Third Party Billings & Collections" project. The portal will be a collaborative tool that allowing persons from IHS, Tribal and Urban sites to access the best methods for performing billing and collections functions and avoiding mistakes made by others. It promises to increase the efficiency, accuracy, and financial returns on claims to third party medical insurance groups. The Learning Portlet is intended to address individual learning and development as much as it is a reference tool.

Although interviews with business office staffs of ACL and Chinle resulted in a broad array of portlets, the prototype will be based on the following portlets:

☐ **Best Practices/Success Stories**: Sharing information regarding the most efficient and accurate methods for performing tasks.

☐ **Lessons Learned**: Providing information on experiences and pitfalls to avoid.

☐ **Process Flows**: Documenting jobs and tasks to reduce training costs and serve as a tool for task completion.

☐ **References**: Providing information relative to a topic, in this case medical information used by billers and coders.

☐ **Learning Resources**: Providing information for persons to increase their knowledge relevant to the topic, such as medical coding, RPMS, etc.

☐ **Forms**: Providing a centralized source for commonly used business office forms.

Efforts are underway to complete the architectural modifications and have a fully functional prototype developed for the ACL and Chinle pilot groups by the beginning of April, 2001. The completed pilot with IHS, Tribal, and Urban sites is expected in August, 2001. At this time evaluations and future plans will be reviewed. For additional information, please contact:

Bernie Dailleboust, Project Manager (bernie.dailleboust@ mail.ihs.gov) or Jim Beyer, Web Systems Developer (james.beyer @mail.ihs.gov).

Telecommunications News

Tom Fisher

We installed a firewall on the Internet access point at the ITSC. The firewall has the capability to prevent unauthorized users from entering our network from an external point. It will allow us, in the near future, to observe any attempts by outside users to inappropriately access our network. We have also installed a Virtual Private Network (VPN) which allows a remote user to have a secure connection from the remote site to the IHSNet. This VPN will eventually provide all IHS, Tribal, and Urban groups with a secure connection from remote locations. It will also provide people on travel with connectivity.

We are in the process of converting all the frame relay lines from AT&T to MCI with the end of May 2001 as an expected completion date.

We are also preparing the new MCI FTS 2001 cost data and expect to have this data posted to the web sometime in March 2001.

We were hit with the Kournikova virus during the second week of February. Although we closed the network to keep the virus from spreading, it had already reached most sites before the network

could be shut down. All Areas were cleaned and back up by Thursday morning (2/15). As we worked on cleaning up after the virus, our discussions with the Areas resulted in implementation of new procedures which will assist us in the future to identify and handle virus problems more effectively. We now have call back lists and quick response procedures in place.

From Application Development …

Ray Willie/Carl Gervais

Accounts Receivable
Patch 1 to Version 1.3 includes a new menu option on the Management Menu called Automatic Write Off which will be activated until July 1, 2001, at which time it will expire. With this option, users can clean up A/R accounts of bills with unpaid positive balances of less than $20,000. The user selects the accounts, then the date of service before which all bills in those accounts are to be written off. This date of service must be no later than June 30, 2001. The software writes the aged bills to a new write off category type of 501 Automatic Write-off. This option is locked with the BARZ CLEAN key. This version contains a new menu option, which allows you to post an electronic remittance advice from Medicare.

Third Party Billing
Patch 3 to Third Party Billing contains several modifications, and it enables the package to support the following new requirements:

1. The new ADA-99 Dental Form to comply with Wisconsin Medicaid requirements.

2. The addition of dental code prefixes, making it possible for users to prefix dental codes with one alpha character as required by individual insurers.

3. Version 6 of the electronic UB-92 as required by Medicare as of March 1, 2001.

Average Wholesale Price
The 1st QTR 2001 AWP update was successfully tested in Oklahoma and released as Patch 10 on 1/5/01. The next quarterly AWP update will be released in April, 2001.

Common Procedural Terminology (CPT) Codes Update
CPTs for 2001 were nationally released on December 29, 2000. Supplemental HCPCS codes were included in that distribution.

ICD9 Updates
These updates were released on 12/6/00. A couple of hundred new procedures, including changes to old procedures, were updated this year.

Medical Administration Service (MAS) v5.0
Patch releases to this package over the past few months have included an enhancement that allows sites to create Primary Care Component (PCC) visits when checking patients in for appointments.

Customizable Encounter Form (PCC+)
This software, currently in test, prints out a Primary Care

Component (PCC) form that is customized for clinic and provider. It has demographics, provider information, and date and time printed at the bottom. Since the form can include elements of the Health Summary and Action Profile (Drug History), the PCC becomes more of a to-do list rather than a blank slate. Additionally, the top 60 ICD-9 codes for the provider, the top 10 for the clinic, and the Problem List are on the form. This allows the provider to use the PCC as a Chargemaster/ Superbill. On the second page is a listing of the active medications so that the provider can renew a script just by circling the active medication and signing the form.

Executive Information Support System
This software, currently in Beta test, provides an integrated series of applications for information delivery. It will enable a user to display critical management-level information about the enterprise with graphs or reports (e.g., anticipated revenue from TPB claims for a specific month).

IHS 2001 Information Technology Conference

The Division of Information Resources is pleased to announce that the 2001 IHS Information Technology and Program Support Conference has been scheduled for **July 9 - 13, 2001**. This year it will be held at the Hilton Hotel in

Albuquerque, New Mexico. The theme of the conference is **"e-Health, HIPAA, Strategic Partnerships & More."**

IHS staff, tribal representatives, 638 tribes, and staff from the Federal/State and private sector are all invited. This conference is the annual forum for demonstration of the latest developments in technology. The week consists of roundtable discussions, meeting, and presentations focused on information system policies and issues that affect Indian health. IT system and service vendors will also be onboard with their latest offerings.

A call for presenters and presentations will be forthcoming with the conference agenda developed soon after. Information on hotel reservations will also be provided soon.

Contacts for the presentations and workshops are:

Shirley Lujan, 505-248-4348;

Evangeline Lente, 505-248-4413;

Jackie Atauvich, 505-248-4416.
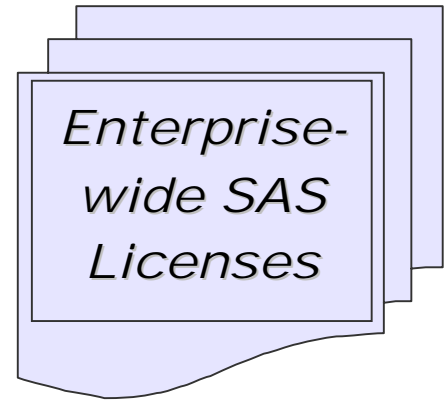
New Debt Collection Software

New debt collection software, currently in test at Gallup and soon at Tahlequah, provides new functionality for the Accounts Receivable package that will export outstanding accounts receivable to Transworld debt collection agency for collection. This software is threshold driven

in connection with the A/R package. That is, when a bill is outstanding over an indicated number of days and a specified dollar amount (e.g. aged over 90 days and claim is over $100), the software sends a message to the Transworld agency with all relevant data. They then work the outstanding debt for a small flat fee per claim. When IHS receives payment, it then closes the respective claim. This new functionality allows sites to set up the automatic export process and to indicate the number of days and dollar amount thresholds.

The following enhancements have been made to the software version being tested:

1. A new site parameter, Maximum Transmissions, allows the site to set a maximum number of claims to refer to Transworld. This feature enables a site to match the number of claims they send to Transworld to the number they have contracted to send.

2. Another new site parameter, Restrict Payer, allows individual sites to deselect certain insurance companies from being referred to Transworld.

3. The outstanding claim collection and export process can be scheduled on a daily basis as an automated background job. Being able to schedule it, now means this process requires less work and gives less room for human error.

A debt collection report provides the dollar amount, claim number and payer name, number of claims, and total unpaid dollar amount included in each export.

Enterprise-wide SAS Licenses

IHS will soon be participating in an HHS-wide enterprise SAS license. This means that all agencies under HHS will be able to buy under the same contract with access to a number of core software products in the SAS suite.

The core SAS suite includes:

- **Base SAS**: The epicenter which provides tools essential for mastering data access, management, analysis, and presentation.

- **SAS Scalable Performance Data Server**: An open data server used to manage changing enterprise requirements by adding more capacity and enhancing performance for mission-critical applications. Using parallel process and data server capabilities, enables efficient access to large volumes of data for hundreds of concurrent network clients across multiple processors.

- **Enterprise Reporter**: Enables the user to see, analyze, and present information customized to their specific reporting needs.

- **Enterprise Guide**: A Windows client which allows users to access any data types supported by the SAS System,

use the execution power of that machine to run any SAS processes, and return professional reports and graphics to your PC.

- **SAS/ASSIST**: Provides a task-oriented visual interface to the SAS System, a personal gateway to productivity and task completion.

- **SAS/GRAPH**: Provides information and presentation color graphics capabilities to produce, store, and retrieve a wide variety of business charts, plots, and maps in many colors and patterns.

- **SAS/TOOLKIT**: Enables you to write your own customized SAS procedures (including graphics procedures), formats, functions, CALL routines, and database engines in several languages.

- **SAS/C Compiler**: A portable implementation of the high-level C programming language containing the compiler, a run-time library, a number of utility programs, and several configurations of the run-time library for specialized environments.

The agreement between HHS and the SAS Institute is ready and only the contracting details remain to be completed. The contract provides HHS and its agencies with the core products, available on multiple platforms for an unlimited number of users, for one year. Thereafter in subsequent years, we will pay only maintenance costs for the core products and be able to purchase other non-core products at a discounted price.

The license entitles each OPDIV to "pilot" programs; i.e., SAS

Institute technical staff will work directly with IHS staff onsite to develop and deploy an application, enabling us to get it up and running quickly. In addition, documentation and knowledge transfer takes place while SAS technical staff is working with IHS onsite.

Under the HHS contract, we will be considered a pilot program which means that the SAS Institute will provide us with onsite technical support. Institute technical resource(s) will come onsite and help with design and development efforts and, at the same time, provide knowledge transfer and documentation developed by the Institute.

This will be a collaborative effort between the Areas and the ITSC and will be distributed to sites choosing to participate. The SAS software is currently installed on a central IHS server and is being used to support the ORYX program. From their experience using this software, the ORYX staff will be in a position to provide training and support to the Areas and sites electing to participate.

ITSC Project Status Reporting

There are now two new ways on the web that you can access status information on active ITSC projects. Various reports provide updates from the team leads of projects that are in progress or that are considered ongoing maintenance/sustaining efforts. The updates also include

estimates, by percentage, of how much of the project has been completed. Here are the sites:

Intranet Access: From the IHS Intranet home (home.ihs.gov), select the Information Technology Support Center option, then the Project Reporting option.

Internet Access: On the IHS Internet home (www.ihs.gov), select Links & Documents, then click on the Indian Health Service title, select Chief Information Officer, then ITSC Projects.

This is a great way to keep in touch with what's going on in ITSC.

New ITSC Training Specialist

Larry Saavedra: New ITSC Training Specialist

We'd like to introduce **Larry Saavedra**, who has just joined the ITSC Training Team. Mr. Saavedra comes to us with an impressive background in training, particularly in the area of technical support. He was most recently with Client Logic, a provider of technical support for

Earthlink and Micron, where he trained new hires, provided ongoing refresher training, and worked with cross-training initiatives.

Before Client Logic, Mr. Saavedra provided training and technical troubleshooting with Gateway Technical Support center and with the Quicken product at the Intuit Technical Support Center. He served 6 years in the U.S. Army Ranger Battalion first as a Personnel Management Supervisor and as a Retention and Training Supervisor.

Training Opportunities and Events

The ITSC Training Homepage provides links to the RPMS training calendars of ITSC and several IHS Area Offices. Access the ITSC Training Homepage at the following URL:

home.training.ihs.gov

This site also links to a comprehensive listing of meetings, conferences, and other training opportunities updated almost every week. These events are sponsored by a variety of organizations and are listed with their dates, locations, contact information, and costs.

Check the ITSC Training Homepage and its links to the Area websites to get more information about the following RPMS training opportunities, listed by sponsor:

March

California Rural IHB
3/20-22 - Women's Health V2.0
3/27-28 - CPT Coding in the Clinical Setting
3/29-30 - ICD-9-CM Coding Basic

ITSC/Albuquerque
3/28-30 - New Customizable Encounter Form

Nashville Area
3/28-29 - Internet & RPMS/PCC

NW Portland Area IHB
3/19-23 - Level I Site Manager
3/27-28 - Immunization

Phoenix Area
3/20–21 - Accounts Receivable Page (New Electronic Remittance Functionality)

April

Aberdeen Area
4/2-5 - Women's Health

California Rural IHB
4/24-25 - Patient Scheduling V5.0
4/26 - Patient Registration V6.0

ITSC/Albuquerque
4/10 - Laboratory Package for Site Managers (at Billings)
4/11-12 - Laboratory Package Refresher for Current Users (at Billings)
4/18-19 - Radiology Package
4/30-5/4 - Introduction to Laboratory Package

Nashville Area
4/3-5 - PCC Data Entry
4/24-25 - PCC Mental Health/ Social Services Package

NW Portland Area IHB
4/11-12 - Women's Health
4/17-18 - Contract Health Management System (CHS)
4/17-19 - Diabetes Management System (with Calif. Area)

4/19-20 - Referred Care Information System
4/24-26 - Intro to Q-Man & Diabetes Management system

Phoenix Area
4/3-4 - Patient Registration V6.0
4/9–10 - Community Health Representative V1.0

Portland Area
4/3 - Pharmacy Point of Sale Train the Trainers (ITSC)
4/17 - CHS Administration and CHS Package V. 3.0
4/19 - Referred Care Information System

May

Aberdeen Area
5/14-18 - Q-Man Training

California Rural IHB
5/15-16 - PCC Data Entry V4.0

NW Portland Area IHB
5/23-24 - Community Health Representative

Phoenix Area
5/8–9 - Chemical Dependency Management Information System (CDMIS) V4.1
5/14–18 - PCC Data Entry I and II, V2.0
5/22-23 - Referred Care Information System V1.0 ("Train the Trainers")

Portland Area
5/14-18 - Third Party Billing & Accounts Receivable

Online Learning Portal in Final Stages

The Health and Human Services is now providing its Operating Divisions (IHS is one) with access to hundreds of **NETg** and **SkillSoft** online courses. SkillSoft course topics are referred to sometimes as "people skills" and "soft skills." This new offering will be made available to IHS IT technical people, replacing the existing NETg set of courses accessible through the ITSC Training website.

While we are in the final stages of arrangements, we are also testing access to and use of the new HHS DL/Learning Portal (the doorway into the NETg and SkillSoft online courses).

Access to this new HHS DL/Learning Portal is being set up for everyone who had NETg accounts as of October 2000. If you are a member of the ITSC and did not have an account in the NETg online system as of October 2000, please email David.White@mail.ihs.gov to make sure you get included in an update being prepared for HHS.

As soon as everything is finalized and tested, we will provide a link to this new learning portal from the ITSC Training homepage and notify everyone in ITSC of its availability. We'll also include full instructions on how to use it.

ITSC Call Center Stats

Len Kulleseid

The Call Center received 393 calls from 10/1/00 through 2/28/01. They closed 353 orders in that same period (289 - 81.9% - were closed within 14 days). Here's how that breaks down:

Same Day:	164
One Day:	49
Two Days:	19
3-14 Days:	57
15 Days or more:	30

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) on IHS Web

Mark Leo-Russell

Over the past year the IHS Web Team has been working to bring Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to the IHS web sites. The Facilities Locator application and other interactive maps are available on the Area Offices page of the IHS Internet web site

(www.ihs.gov/FacilitiesServices/AreaOffices/index.asp). The locator application allows you to search for the nearest IHS facility and get driving instructions and maps. It also allows you to get detailed street maps and driving instructions between most locations in the continental US. These maps are served-up using ESRI's RouteMap IMS and ArcView IMS software products.

GIS is a powerful technology that combines spatial databases with mapping to provided analysis and data presentation not available with other technologies.

Although GIS has been around for almost 20 years, until recently it was only available using somewhat expensive software. The Web Team's efforts bring this technology to your desktop using just a web browser.

In addition to developing applications and on-line maps, the Web Team has been working on other GIS-related projects. These include several training classes and workshops, assisting users with GIS projects, developing a variety of facility and application-specific data sets, and working with contractors to provide data

and applications. Last November the Web Team conducted activities at Rockville and Albuquerque in conjunction with International GIS Day.

In the next year the team will be expanding the GIS to include an on-line data catalog, more interactive maps, and developing techniques for programs and departments to include maps and spatial data on their individual web sites.

For addition information on the GIS project, contact:

Mark Leo-Russell:
    markl@cmbsyb.hqw.ihs.gov

or Mark Kroska:
    mark.kroska@mail.ihs.gov

ITSC Call Support Center

888-830-7280

You can also access the Call Support Center online via the RPMS home page at

www.ihs.gov/Cio/RPMS.

ITSC Director, Russell Pittman
(505) 248-4189
russell.pittman@mail.ihs.gov

TMT and CSMT, Tom Fisher -
(505) 248-4219
tom.fisher@mail.ihs.gov

NPIRS, Notah Begay
(505) 248-4150
notah.begay@mail.ihs.gov

ASDS, Ray Willie
(505) 248-4411
raymond.willie@mail.ihs.gov

Web Team, Len Thurman
(520) 670-4767
len.thurman@mail.ihs.gov

SDST, Bruce Parker -
(505) 248-4360
bruce.parker@mail.ihs.gov

Here are more RPMS training website addresses:

Aberdeen Area:
home.Aberdeen.ihs.gov/ihstraining.html

California Rural IHB:
cri-web2.crihb.ihs.gov/Training/training.htm

Nashville Area:
home.nashville.ihs.gov/training/nsao2001.htm

North Portland Area IHB:
www.npaihb.org/training/2001training.html

Phoenix Area:
www.ihs.gov/Cio/rpmstr01.asp

IHS Portland Area:
home.portland.ihs.gov/training/default.asp

Lab Training:
www.ihs.gov/Cio/labtrain.asp

If your Area has a training schedule and/or website you'd like to have listed here and linked to the ITSC Training homepage, please send the URL address to David.White@mail.ihs.gov.